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Wild. The valley and villa of
Horace. 1915

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PAPERS

THE VALLEY AND VILLA
OF HORACE

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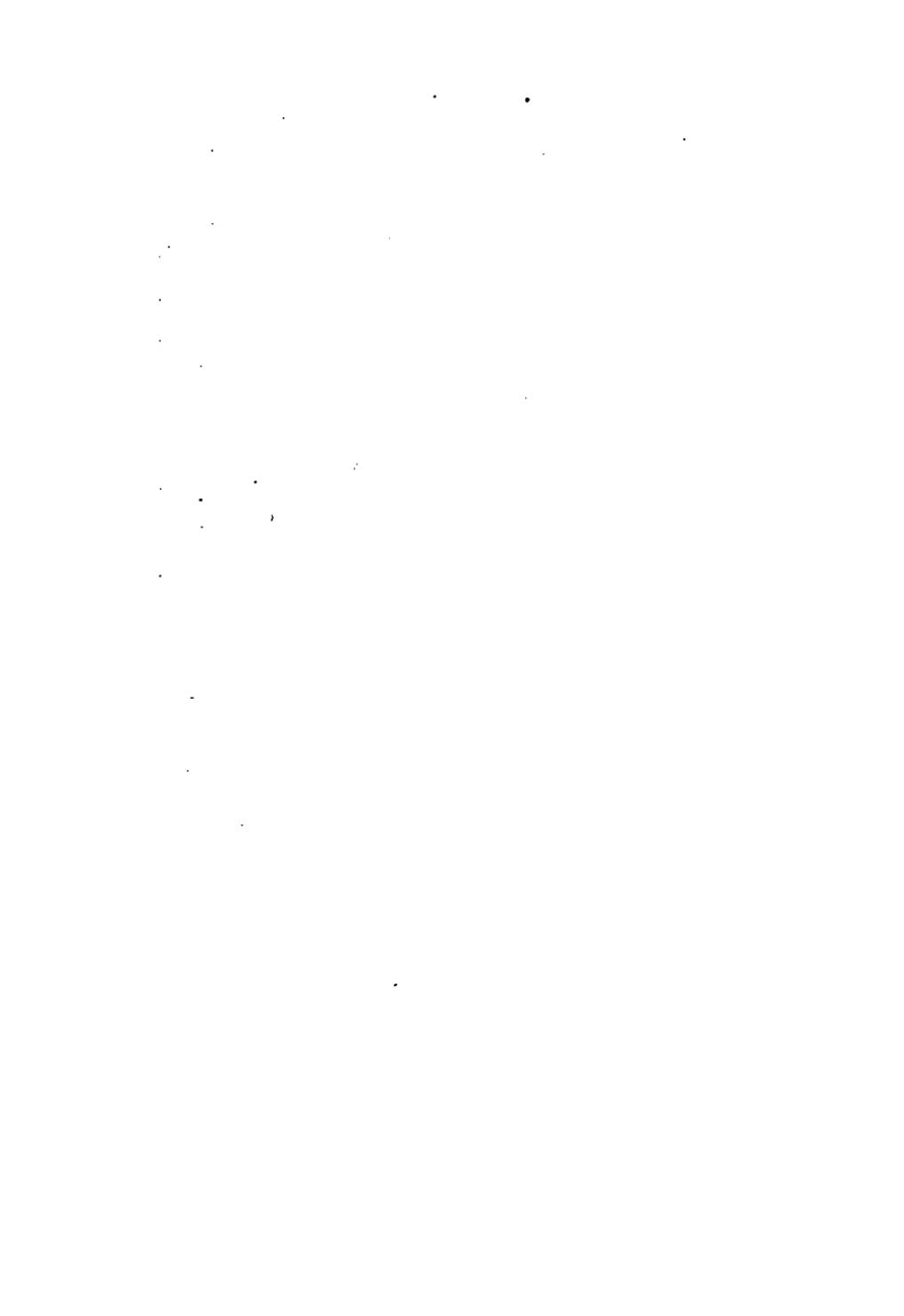


Prof. E. K. Rand
with the Author's
compliments.

Payson S. Wie



The Valley and Villa of Horace





The Valley and Villa of Horace

By
Payson Sibley Wild



Chicago Literary Club
1915

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MEMORIAE
I. G. C.
DOCTI ET AMABILIS
QUI UNA CUM G. L. H. ET P. S. W.
ITER HORATIANUM FECIT
LIBELLUM SACRUM ESSE VOLUIT
AUCTOR

ILLUSTRATIONS

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The author desires to acknowledge most gratefully the kindness and rare courtesy of his friend, Professor O. F. Long (quem Di ament!), whose photographs of the Licenza Valley and the ruins of the villa, taken about the time of the author's visit, adorn these pages.



THE VALLEY AND VILLA OF HORACE

HIS paper has no designs upon your critical faculties. Nor does it aim to make any contribution to Horatian hermeneutics, for the pagan lyrists (pagan because human and natural) has long been the cloyed recipient of interpretations without number. For the time being we are merely Epicurean pilgrims, powers of him who succeeded no one and no successor in Roman lyric verse; admirers of the poet whom multitudes have had to be a vest-pocket edition of university, the quintessential expression of trite homely yet solemn and inevitable truth tained in a perfection of form that is unrivalled.

The cosmic scene-shifters, who are so sly and fiendishly busy at this time

dragging from the universal stage before our very eyes the settings of an old era and lugging in the furniture of a new, cannot permanently divert our attention from the great and the wise who played their part in earlier scenes. We should stifle, if we could not from time to time return to our ancient heritage. More than ever is the wisdom of the ages necessary; more than ever must we lean on the prophets of old for such comfort as is at all obtainable, for our prophets to-day, from Haeckel and Bergson to Pastor Russell and Billy Sunday, are thrashing vainly on padded couches, while the foam of madness drools from their purple lips. Who to-day could say to us with such elusive grace and beauty, and yet so simply:

“With purpose wise, in shadowy night the god
Hath hid the future's outcome from us all,
And laughs at our undue anxiety.
With tranquil heart each daily problem meet!
All else, like some great river's mighty flow,
Is borne along, now gliding peacefully
Within its confines to th' Etruscan Sea,
Now rolling rocks and stones and broken trees,
And cattle, aye, and houses too, together,
With echoing of the hills and neighboring wolds,
While lashed to fury are the peaceful streams
By this fierce deluge.”¹

¹ Od. III, 29, 29.

“Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premit deus,
Ridetque si mortalis ultra
Fas trepidat.”

seems not unreasonable to believe that if those wide range of mental vision, broad rests, courage, ardor, and sanity, have made his work a beacon in literature and interpretation of life for high and low alike alive to-day, we might safely expect to see his voice lifted in some large way, sane and effectively. He who, with a mental vision that is our envy and despair, saw one civilization give birth to a new order of things, could probably view with equal detachment the parturition, going on to-day, with the "twilight sleep," of a lusty litter of infants, whose destiny is still a weighty subject of discussion in the council chambers of Olympus.

But Horace we have not with us in the land; in these trying times of "blood and thunder," of quasi demigods in "shining armor." Let us then visit him, forgetting for a little the shouting of the scene-shifters, who have so rudely broken the continuity of our illusions; forgetting that the world is in armed camp, and that Libitina is holding international inquest; forgetting that the smic god has visited with destruction the beautiful valley whither we are to go—forgetting these things, let us catch the early *voli* train on a perfect Roman morning in April. We shall see what has been seen before by thousands of devoted pilgrims; we shall do the things that many others have

done, and our observations will doubtless savor of the triteness that has turned many a travel sketch into a vapid conflux of trivialities. But for all that it is good to "re-visit Yarrow." Unless his imagination has lost its vibrant quality, there is a thrill for even the most hardened globe-trotter in each successive pilgrimage to the haunts of the great dead, whether it be Concord, Box Hill, Weimar, the Forum, or the Valley of the Licenza in the Sabine Hills.

I believe we are to infer from certain passages in his writings that Horace used to make the journey between his farm and Rome on mule back. Our progress toward the Sabine country, as the train leaves the environs of Rome and dallies among the poppies that line the track—the engine driver evidently has imbibed something of their soporific influence—is apparently no more rapid than the poet's, the only difference being, so far as I can observe, that we are not astride of anything. But our rate of speed matters little, for the Campagna lies before us with all its charm. Off to the right are the golf links of ancient memory, where one may view in a glass case the well preserved bronze head of Maecenas' driving iron, which tradition says was found by the osseous remains of what Cuvier declared to be skeletal fragments of an Ethiopian youth. Conjectural explanations have been

erous, but we shall not stop to discuss
n. Those who play golf will be the best
ssers. In passing I might say that the
age visitor to these links should fortify
self, if possible, with some sort of formal
ument of introduction, for the club mem-
ship to-day is largely British, and one
ild therefore not swing breezily into the
's front door, and announce himself as
ember of the Peewee Valley, the Pisca-
qua, the Scrub Oak, the Shoshone Falls,
what not, Country Club, thereby think-
to secure for himself a cordial entrée
an invitation to luncheon. Such an aspir-
to the club's privileges will shortly find
self explaining his connection with his
owned home club to the all-enveloping
r, and much rarefied at that. I was de-
ed myself from seeking an official pass-
by the fear that the influential friend
whom I had thought to apply might feel
elled to write in my behalf to the club
orities what Horace wrote in a letter in-
lucing Septimius to the future Tiberius:

a upon plea, believe me, I have used
oipe he'd hold me from the task excused;
feared the while it might be thought I feigned
low what influence I perchance have gained;
sembling it as nothing with my friends,
keep it for my own peculiar ends.
to escape such dread reproach, I put
blushes by, and boldly urge my suit."¹

¹Epp. 1,9. Martin's tr.

But we are still crawling eastward, and it is getting much warmer. The aqueducts, bridging the long and shallow gulf between the Seven Hills and the Delectable Mountains; suggestive heaps of ruins that dot the landscape in every direction; the Sabine promontories ahead and the Alban Hills to the south,—all these beautiful things, sleeping beneath the dreamy sunshine of an Italian Spring, feed our contemplative faculties and nourish our high meditations. We are in a mood quite Augustan as the train comes to an actual stop at Acque Albule, where suddenly the sweet odor of dew is supplanted by the stifling smell of sulphur-rettued hydrogen, and for a moment we fancy: “*When we have descended whither our Father Aeneas, rich Tullus, and Ancus have preceded us, we are but dust and shadow.*”¹ But we are soon reassured, for the sign on the station is neither Avernus nor Cocytus; no Stygian gondolier in filthy array appears to be doing business on the nauseous waters of the sulphur pools, and the train rambles on again.

To the northeast of us we see and identify Monte Gennaro, one of the high spots of the Sabines, four or five miles due east of which lies the chief object of our pilgrimage. Monte Gennaro is a prominent but

¹ Od. IV, 7, 14.

idly summit, whose faint outlines used
' to greet us from our balcony in Rome
' the site of the ancient Gardens of
ust.

nd now we are climbing into Tivoli, still
orious spot, though its dust has been
ied away on the feet of thousands who
w nothing of its sacred character and
associations. By lay and cleric, from
ace to the authors of Newdigate prize
ms, have its delights been rhymed and
sed. Lo, are they not contained in all
books of the chronicles of enraptured
sters of every nation and every clime!

not for us to-day are "*the echoing grotto*
Albunea, the Anio tumbling in cascades,
urnus' sacred grove, and the orchards wet with
tling rills,"¹ though half a hundred up-
tious Jehus would be only too glad to
w them to us at certain fixed (or un-
d) rates—in addition to other good and
table considerations, which are not the
st important part of every vehicular con-
ct in the Italy of to-day. To the tender
rcies of these charioteers we consign the
jority of our fellow passengers, who, like
many of their kind, hear only the mega-
one call of the show places; whose ears are
attuned to that thinner yet sweeter note
iting *ex valle vatis vegetante memoriam.*²

Dd. I, 7, 12.
From the memory-stirring valley of the bard.

With an empty train and a more pronounced sense of belonging to the elect we now find ourselves being borne into the Sabine territory. In a short half-hour we are at Vicovaro, as it is called to-day, the *Varia* of Horace's time, a market town, where the poet and his tenants probably disposed of their produce and obtained farm and household supplies. But we do not dismount here; our destination lies a parasang farther on—the monohippic "*Stazione*" of Mandela.

Before we set foot, however, on sacred soil, shall we not invoke a muse? Not our poet's this time, but the muse of one of those numerous umbratical English poetasters of the Early Nineteenth Century Renaissance, as it were—that period in the dusty arcana of which repose so many blighted literary aspirations. With a will to appreciate greater than his power of execution, this classical enthusiast of a century ago implored Calliope's aid in the composition of a mildly denatured epic, that seems to sing itself best on the melodeon or the harpsichord. Only in bibliographical research or in the preparation of club papers do these curiosities come to light, for which perchance we should be duly grateful. Sprinkled with the inevitable "*haec fabula docet*"s that characterize the product of this minor renaissance, banal and commonplace though it is for the most



LICENZA FROM THE NORTHERN END OF THE RUINS

throughout, this too lengthy Song of the
ne Farm has yet its “purple patch” on
ustian pants, and arouses our enthusi-
by its author’s devotion to the spirit of
ace, and his great interest in the latter’s
ne estate. Horace is literally and ex-
tensively the author’s guide. The poet
ks in every paragraph. Now that we
at our valley’s gateway, let us summon
ace to our side in the words of our En-
t coreligionist, as we find them in his
ing lines:¹

1 Tibur’s scenes who would not linger long
hat feels the love of Nature, or of Song?
ut Horace calls us hence, upbraids delay,
nd comes, himself, companion of our way.
is not the dream of Fancy—for I hear
is own words vibrate on my charmèd ear,
hile pleasure, mixt with awe, my bosom fills.

Yours, O ye Nine, I mount the Sabine Hills!
Whither the cool Praeneste charmed before,
Tibur supine, or Baiae’s liquid shore!²
O when shall I behold thee, rural seat!
Then, in the calm of undisturbed retreat,
With books, and idle hours, and soothing sleep,
he cares of life in sweet oblivion steep!³

Hus, still embodied in the tuneful page,
hat once enraptured an Augustan Age
And shall, as long as Taste and Virtue last,
harm future ages, as it charmed the past),
he Poet speaks—’tis He! He meets my view,

Robert Bradstreet (1810). ²Od. III, 4, 21.
Sat. II, 6, 60.

In the same form his sportive pencil drew:
'Of stature small, with locks of early gray,'¹

While wit and sense in his mild features play.
To whom I thus: Bard, whom all tastes admire!
Great Judge, great Master of the Latian Lyre,
Thou wilt not, with fastidious pride, refuse
To hold sweet converse with a pilgrim muse,
Who seeks the spot where thou wast wont to stray,
Seat of thy life, and subject of thy lay,—

But still be present at thy votary's side,
Her kind companion, and her faithful guide,
Pointing each object, as she moves along,
That claims a line of thy immortal song!"

There is the usual knot of unoccupied humanity on the station platform, a class that has made a distinct name for itself wherever railroads have penetrated the world over. We observe the women especially, having perhaps subliminally in mind that misty time when celibate warrior bands from the Rome of Romulus deemed it expedient for the good of the race to convert this fair Sabine country into a forcible Gretna Green. But as we make our way through the idlers, we opine that a recurrence of a similar deflating expedition would not be probable for lack of sufficient incentive.

We turn the corner of the station and an involuntary exclamation escapes us:

"*Eheu, vos umbrae Horati et muli curti!*"²

¹Epp. I, 20, 24.

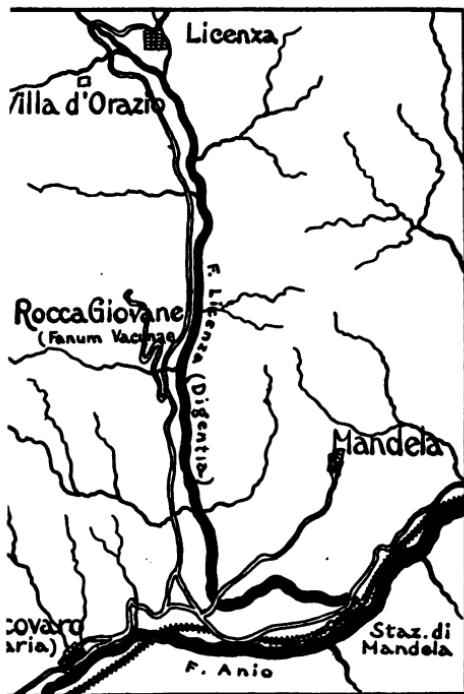
²Ah! Shades of Horace and his dockèd mule!

there stands a fully equipped, modern
line omnibus marked "Licenza," all
y to take us thither. *Paene concidimus!*¹
decide to take it, for by so doing we shall
e more time later for the day's inves-
tions and contemplations. It is there;
cannot remove it; we will not let it shat-
our dreams. Nevertheless, we had as
i expected to find a boiler factory on
nt Lucretilis as this modern abortion
ng the lonely *Via Digentiana*. We are
only Horatians on board. A few natives
uply seats here and there. One voluble
ine sits directly opposite us, and, easily
ning whence we are and whither bound,
ages us in affable converse. "Yes," he
has lived in America, and displays, that
may stir us to grievous envy, a huge
ss timepiece that cost him "*due dollar*"
ome dubious, American three-ball mu-
m. "Yes," he helped to construct the
ton (not the Claudian) aqueduct for three
lars a day, and now resides in affluence
l retirement on his Sabine farm. Perhaps
knows "*Orazio*" better than we.
There is little to see from the 'bus win-
ws as the conveyance thunders speedily
the valley. We get it all later afoot.
e real peace of the place does not come
ne to us on account of the chugging

¹We almost collapsed!

motor and grinding wheels. On the right we glimpse an inconspicuous, fairly clear stream of moderate size making its way to the Anio, and we know it is the Licenza, the "*gelidus Digentia rivus*" of the Epistle to Lollius.¹ Rocca Giovane and the former acres of Horace are somewhere on our left. Across the stream are the hills in sparse pea-green which form the eastern boundary of the valley. It is plain that we must wait until we reach the end of the route before we can get our bearings and determine the landmarks. As the valley is only four miles long, we have but a few moments to wait, and so curb our impatience. On a steep, rocky promontory, jutting from the narrow upper end of the valley, is the solidly built, cobblestone village of Licenza. Rounding a curve that carries the highway across the stream sharply to the east, our 'bus deposits us in the tiny square of this hoary, palaeolithic community. We refresh ourselves at the nearest "*taberna*"² and "*popina*"³ combined, with a draft of Horace's own "*Sabinum*," haggle mildly but firmly over the price of a bottle of the same, which is designed to go with our luncheon later, and set forth to see the town and spy out the land. Now that the 'bus has disappeared we are startled at the quietness which reigns

¹Epp. 1, 18, 104. "Digentia's cooling stream."
²"Wine Shop." ³"Cook Shop."



MAP OF THE LICENZA VALLEY

supreme. From innumerable doors, alleys, and other mysterious openings silent hordes of chubby children steal forth and follow in our wake, as we climb the chief village street. They are unresponsive to our kindly suggestion to disperse, and so we take them on, feeling like Pied Pipers, but without malevolence. Our peregrination in the direction taken is abruptly ended. We have reached the brink of the town, and are gazing over a precipice. But the view! The upper valley and all that in it is, is before us. Gray-green slopes of scanty olive and grape; new grass; fresh-leaved holm and ilex here and there; the wandering rivulet; a few unmoved and unmovable donkeys in odd spots absorbing the warmth; an occasional rustic lazily wielding his mattock; and all around us on every side the enveloping hills. This is all that for the moment we actually see; but it is beautiful, satisfying, restful. The peace and simple charm, rather than any wild beauty, or distinctive scenic feature, are what Horace emphasizes in all his allusions to this rural retreat. We can now, as we never could before, see why. No nerve could remain long shattered or even sensitive after a brief exposure to air like this, which is at once an anaesthetic and a tonic.

As we emerge from our reverie and begin to conjecture whither to look for the

that have been sung into undying, we are all at once conscious of another once. We turn to greet—not Horace (igh it would not have surprised us one had it been he), but the village padre, courteously offers to indicate to us the ts of interest. We are grateful for his ces, and with deepest interest look and 1. With a scarcely noticeable move- of his hand he dismisses the now augmented flock of children, whose vior it must be said had been most ex- ary, for they had neither turned "cart ts" at the rate of a dozen per *centesimo*, annoyed us by their infantile importu- s, after the manner of the hardened off- g of the Roman proletariat. Turning to us the padre points across the valley *o indice digito*¹ to a little cleared spot aps a kilometer away, that we can bare- e. "La Villa d'Orazio," he says. With ield glasses we can make out something seems to resemble the partially erected dations of a house. "The *signori* will ember this, will they not?" queries our tor, and forthwith he recites to us in mingly accented Latin the familiar stan-

"No ivory walls, no gilded halls
Mark my abode's extravagance;
As upstart heir of millionaire

¹ With his lean forefinger.

I've gained no swift inheritance.
But friends in me find loyalty,
A kindly vein of genius too;
By rich men sought, though I have naught,
What further crave I, gods, of you?
Nor seek I more from his rich store
My ably generous friend. In fine
Enough delight for this glad wight
Is just yon Sabine farm of mine.”¹

The padre is indeed a treasure trove, and at once arouses our personal interest. He recites so delightfully too. The old sonorous lines, leavened with the limpidity of the liquid Latin of to-day, seem to fall from his lips a veritable rill of verbal gold.

But there is a cry of woe down the street. From every dwelling emerge on the instant anxious parents and grandparents. The air is full of distressful volubility. We hasten toward an excited group of children, but the padre has been quicker than we. He has a weeping *bambino* in his arms, that has just been handed up by a vine-dresser from a six by eight perpendicular vineyard situated a few feet below the parapet that guards the main street. The child is unhurt but frightened. Having soothed it the padre hands it to its mother, whose objurgations—of even greater vividness, in vigor of thought and figure of speech, than that which we phlegmatic people so readily attribute to our

¹“ Non ebur neque aureum
Mea renidet in domo lacunar . . . ”
Od. II, 18.



LOOKING NORTH ACROSS THE "HORTUS" WITH ITS "PISCINA"

nce neighbors—continue to strike our s we return to our observations. The laughingly explains. "It is a com-
occurrence," he says. "In fact, fre-
news items appear in our district
s, from Licenza, Saracenesco, Rocca
ne, and other villages that cling to pin-
, to the effect that Giovanni, Maria,
oever it may have been, 'fell out of
recently.' We scrutinize the padre's
eenly; yes, there is something in his
nd soon we are all shaking together
silent laughter.

nd is that Lucretilis?" I ask, point-
o the wide slopes above the *Villa*
zio. The padre nods. "Yes, all of yon-
illside, how far up we do not know, but
r down possibly as Rocca Giovane,
rised the Horatian estate. We have
means of determining its exact acreage.
ecture has hazarded many estimates,
ll lack the supporting facts. The poet
elf usually refers to his farm, as you
, in affectionate diminutives, as, for
ple, in the epistle to his superintendent:

et silvarum et mihi me redditis agelli";¹

elsewhere he speaks of his

Good bailiff of my farm, that snug domain,
Which makes its master feel himself again.
(Conington's tr. Epp. I, 14.)

*'Purae rivos aquae silvae iugera
Paucorum' . . .¹*

We remember the passages well, and
eager to hear more of the padre's beauti-
ful Latin, ask him to recite to us the immortal
invitation to Tyndaris.²

The padre is very obliging, and begins
while our eyes rest dreamily on the Lu-
tilian summit, and we wonder if now in its
sadly denuded glades Faunus could find
hiding place.

"Swift Faunus often doth exchange
Lycaeus for my lovely range
Lucretilis, and there doth keep
In sheltered dale, from rain and gale
And Summer's sun, my tender sheep.

In safety run through wood and wold
My ewes that stray far from the fold
In search of thyme and arbutus.
They fear no snake in fen or brake
No wolf that wanders ravenous,

Whenever Pan with dulcet reed
In vale and on Ustica's mead
Awakes the echoes, Tyndaris.
The Gods love me; my piety,
My lyric song have won me this!

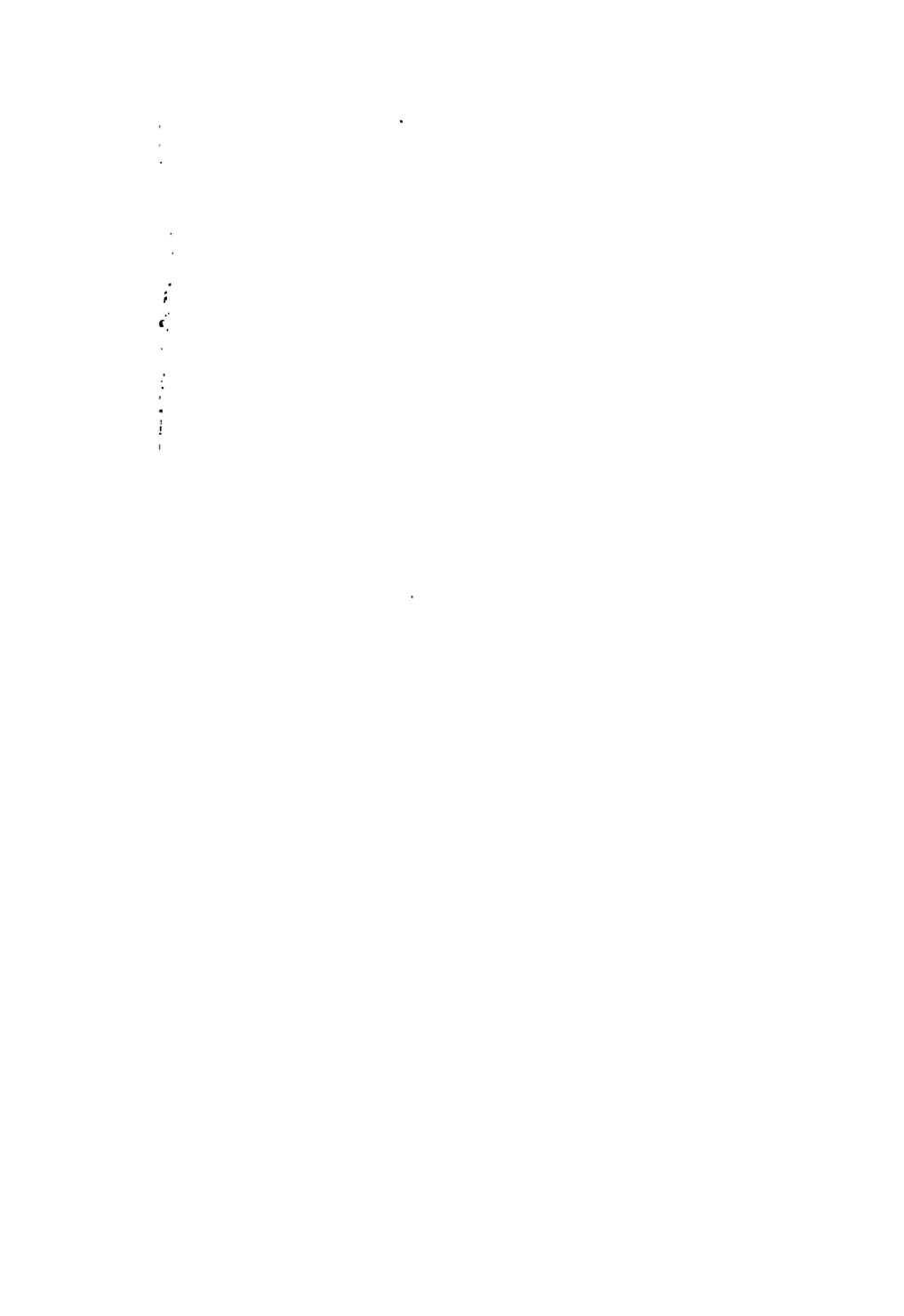
For thee shall Plenty's horn be spilled,
With rural joys shalt thou be filled;

¹"My stream of pure water, my woodland of a few acres." (Od. III, 16, 29.)

²"Velox amoenum saepe Lucretilem
Mutat Lycaeum Faunus, et igneum
Defendit aestatem capellis
Usque meis pluviosque ventos." (Od. I, 17.)



OUTLINE OF THE "PISCINA"



Thou here in this secluded dell,
From Procyon's heat a safe retreat,
Shalt on Anacreon's lyre tell

Of Circe's and Penelope's
Joint love for him who roved the seas.
Here shalt thou sip — 'tis innocent —
My Lesbian wine beneath this vine,
Nor know unseemly merriment.

Thou needst not fear lest thy good name
From wanton swain shall suffer shame;
The wreath that doth thy fair locks crown,
(Let him beware!) he may not tear,
Nor rend thy unoffending gown."

it we must not linger in Licenza, al-
gh we are loath to part company with
cellent an expositor of Horatian charm
ir new friend the padre. After a most
al exchange of farewells, we are off,
ig a care, however, for the low parapet,
we too "fall out of town."
it stay! It is the voice of the padre call-
o us. Will we not remain just a paltry
moments until he can open for us

*'Non ante verso lene merum cado'?*¹

des, he has something antique, of great
est to palaeographers, to show us. Will
signori not tarry a little quarter of an
? We are not long in deciding. The
y were ever past masters in wine con-
seurship; and the prospect of a "*pia tes-*

)
jar of mellow wine with seal intact. (Od. III,

ta, nata Consule Manlio"¹ is too much for us. Furthermore, the padre's ancient curio may be well worth investigating. Many a rarity has come to light from the subfuscous shelves of humble and unknown incunabula collectors. We turn about and accompany the padre to his modest abode.

The wine is beyond cavil, full of the sunshine of former days, and our hearts are glad within us. Now for his treasure. The padre brings it forth reverently, divers sheets of ancient papyrus covered with Latin characters. "This," he says unctuously, "is one of the most interesting bits of *Horatiana* in existence. I will tell you as briefly as I can what it is. It was found here in Licenza many years ago, and has been carefully preserved and handed down by my predecessors in office. These rotting pieces of papyrus are no other than copies of what must have been a country newspaper issued here in Licenza during the early empire. See, here is its name." And in faded but plain letters we read: "*Praeco Digentianus*."² "Only a small portion is now decipherable," continues the padre; "allow me to read and explain. Here is the first item; it seems to be real 'country' Latin: '*A few days since a bolt from the blue struck an elm*

¹"A good old jug put up when Manlius was consul." (Od. III, 21, 1.)

²"The Licenza Herald."

*landing in neighbor Flaccus' back past
and clean burned up the whole tree. How
it, Quint? We guess you'll think Jupiter
some ice now.'*¹ Strangely enough," the padre, "in the issue for the following week, which I have here, appears what v the thirty-fourth ode of the first book:

I, whom the gods had found a client
Rarely with pious rites compliant,
At unbelief disposed to nibble,
And pleased with every sophist quibble —
, who had deemed great Jove a phantom,
Now own my errors and recant 'em!
Have I not lived of late to witness,
A thwart a sky of passing brightness,
The god, upon his car of thunder,
Cleave the calm elements asunder?
And, through the firmament careering,
Level his bolts with aim unerring?"²

padre pauses and refills our glasses, we drain at a gulp, our amazement ig got the better of our discretion. The second legible item," the padre on, scarcely sipping his glass, "is this: *are glad to include this week among our*

*Ante paucos dies ictu fulminis ex sereno coelo
:ti, ulmo foliosior, quae in agello Horati nostri
deflagravit. Heus Quinte! Quid agis? Nunc
Iovem pro nihilo putare?"*
Iahoney's tr.

*"Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens,
Insanentis dum sapientiae
Consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
Vela dare atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos."*

other contributions of the sort the following "pome" by our esteemed and well-known good fellow down the road. We think it is pretty good stuff, and ought sure to make a hit with G. C.¹ The verses are these:

'Come hither, dear Maecenas, come!
I know my Sabine wine is bum;
But sealed it was by my own hand
That day—our friends will understand—
Th' applause for thee at Pompey's grew so
It almost seemed thou wast Caruso;
And echoes fairly made Rome teeter
As back they rolled from old St. Peter.

At home upon the Esquiline
I know thou hast the choicest wine;
That Cales brand and Caecuban
Would warm the heart of god or man:
Such glorious stuff as flavors thy cups!
Was never meant to moisten my cups!
But here, Maecenas ('tis no jest),
Vin ordinaire tastes like the best.'²

That Maecenas responded is clear," says our host to his auditors, now staring with glassy eyes at the momentous pages, "from what we find in the next issue." Carefully lifting the top sheets he reads:

¹"Hos versus a nostro combibone noto tam bene
compos'tos, libentes, ut semper, in alias huius editionis
nugas ascribimus. C. Cilium (Maecenatem) sane
percutient."

²"Vile potabis modicis Sabinum
Cantharis, Graeca quod ego ipse testa
Conditum levi, datus in theatro
Cum tibi plausus,
Care Maecenas eques, . . ." (Od. I, 20.)



BATHS (OF LATER DATE) AT THE WEST

*G. C. Maecenas, the well-known Fidus es, if we may say so, of Governor Gustus romoter of rural poets, whom we have late- sed from our midst, has just week-ended our excellent neighbor and budding verse- at the latter's summer cottage.''*¹

this time we are well on the way to a ction that we are "*insanentis sapien- onsulli*" de facto, so far as the padre's lent Caecuban has left us any power of ination at all. But the padre is not yet. Like helpless babes we accept his hand our refilled glasses, and listen a dream to his voice, which seems how to be receding from us.

The last bit that we have been able to is this," he says, raising his voice a , which was well he did.

*During the fore part of the ween our Lord : Manor, so to speak, was nearly killed by : falling on him under which he was smok- and composing. We don't know if the tree a rotten one or not, or if some god didn't it in for him. But at any rate he has us some original lines, which haven't been ed anywhere else.'*²

C. Cil. Maecenas, 'fidus Achates' divi Caesaris simus, et literarum quasi fautor, quem nuper raro nobis in mediis iam videmus, finem hebdidis apud vicinum bonum et gemminantem versi- rem degit."

Priore hebdomadis parte, a cadente arbore, sub umbra scribens fumansque sedebat, animam

Our host's voice is now miles away as reads what we know at present as the th teenth ode of the second book :

“O Tree, the man who set thee here
With cursèd hands in a cursèd year,
That thou might' st some day do me harm
And bring disgrace upon my farm:

That man would cut his father's throat,
Nor care a damn whom next he smote;
Some guest perchance on pretext slight
He'd murder in the dead of night.

He'd know Medea's draughts to brew,
And every sort of crime to do.
'Twas he in sooth, thou blackguard stump,
Who put thee there my head to thump.”

The padre has now faded utterly out of our perceptions. In some manner, which would not divulge if I could, we managed to make our way through the square and upon the highway leading back to the villa. Gradually our reason returns, and we begin to exchange comments. The sanest observation seems to be that of one of us who says: “It would appear that country editors are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! . . . Isn't Horace just awful

paene omisit Dominus Villae noster. Utrum ardor fortasse esset putris, an deus iratus poetae in malum intenderet, nescimus; at tamen ille ad hoc poema misit, quod nunc primum vulgo appare

“Ille et nefasto te posuit die,
Quicumque primum, et sacrilega manu
Produxit, arbos, in nepotum
Perniciem opprobriumque pagi.”

al! . . . How that priest could read
verses! . . . And what Olympian
s he serves! . . . Here goes our
of Sabine into the creek! . . . Tell
at do you chaps honestly think that
lesiastical Ganymede was trying to
er, anyway?"

a kilometer or so we walk briskly
ver the road we traversed earlier in
rning, stopping on the concrete bridge
ans the miniature river to gaze up
through a rocky gorge at the bald
ng scars that guard the valley's upper
s. Here there is a suggestion of wild-
Perhaps it was up in there somewhere
Horace, straying "*ultra terminum in*
Sabina" (beyond the limits of his Sa-
ood) with only a walking stick in his
charmed into impotence by his Or-
rehearsal of some casual love ditty, the
l lupine wanderer. One of us suggests
e sing "*Integer vitae*," but after can-
g the situation carefully, we wisely
1. The Sabbath stillness is one deter-
the padre might hear us and laugh
flowing sleeve; and again, if there
ill wolves about, we cannot sing like
e; the result might not be the same.
nodest sign on a slender post, stand-
iere a by-road leaves the highway and
up through a tangle of bushes and
; trees, announces the *Villa d'Orazio*.

With considerable eagerness we hurry up through the thicket to a small, fairly level plateau, and are confronted at last by all that is left—plus modern additions—of the most interesting Summer residence of antiquity. By a freakish twist of the mind, I am led to look first of all for the pine tree that Horace, in a little ode to Diana, says overshadowed his villa:

"Thine, virgin goddess, be the pine
That o'er my cottage doth incline.
As years complete shall past me scud,
I'll offer it a young boar's blood—
A youngster hot for porcine jousts,
And meditating sidelong thrusts."¹

But no such tree is visible. The Huns and the Ostrogoths have converted it into spear-handles. Instead we see a one-headed Cerberus in human garb clambering over the foundation walls toward us with alacrity. His vociferous vocables are evidently meant for us, and we pause. Yes, he is the watchdog of the villa, the government agent in charge of the excavating work, and is regarding us with evident suspicion. Although subsequently we became fully satisfied that this threatening attitude was generic and assumed with malice prepense irrespective

¹"Imminens villa tua pinus esto,
Quam per exactos ego laetus annos
Verris obliquum meditantis ictum
Sanguine donem." (Od. III, 22.)



UPPER REACHES OF THE LICENZA VALLEY

ons, yet for the moment it seems to be specific for some impalpable reason her, and our first conscious reaction being of surprise at being taken so for guerrillas, our second the query in innocent belligerent may most likely take the initiative in proposing measures. I bethink me quickly of the seed cake, that on a famous occasion had another irate guardian, and at once in my pocket for a few specimens of lay manufacture. As there is no serum that will "immunize" the e functionary anywhere against the reaction of such a sedative, I look mediate results. Nor am I disappi. "Cerberus" not only steps aside magniloquently bids us partake freely that the villa has to offer, but also has a significant willingness to act as host and *cicerone*. This offer is quite to hand. We establish a still more intimation with the bailiff by announcing several connections with properly fitted classical movements in that land the bestowal of the poppy-seed cake constantly intimated was ours.

with less scientific than poetic ardor we now begin our rapid survey of the We are thinking not so much of the ed "opus reticulatum" of the sustaining not so much of the tessellated frag-

ments of floors in the spaces that anciently were rooms; not so much of architectural detail and conjectural reconstruction, as of that clamorous longing—now, if ever, to be gratified—for some echo of the Teian strings once strummed in yonder garden of roses. One is always at a loss for words when standing in holy places. The imagination is busy with unutterable things. Mental pictures, that defy reproduction, are flashing before one's mind. As I strive impotently to define in word-images what I seem to see and feel to have been the life going on in this sequestered spot two milleniums ago, I recall Horace's advice to scribblers, good, bad, or indifferent: "*Select a subject well within your powers; he who chooses effectively shall lack neither facility nor felicity of expression.*"¹ The subject matter of my retrospections is clearly "*non aequa viribus,*"² and so I turn mechanically from a dream castle of the past to a very present heap of stone and mortar.

Reckless deforestation, which must have gone on in Italy, I cannot say how long, has been the great ally of natural erosion. Deprived of trees the mountain sides "wash" freely during the rainy season and severe storms. This is one of the sorrowful notes that that fair land strikes to-day in the heart

¹A. P., 38. ²Beyond my powers.

visitor. The Apennines are shorn of glory, which is hardly atoned for by qualities that elicit our unfailing admiration, and their stricken and gullied sides painful reminders of man's necessities and improvidence. It is plain that here once's farm natural agencies thus augmented have been actively at work. Doubtless goodly portions of the poet's goat track on the hillside above us had long had to cover the pavements on which we were walking, and still lie on the fish pond or other unexcavated sections.

ittle wonder, then, that the villa's foundation lay until quite modern times buried under the soil. During the Middle Ages nothing was known of the site. It is only in the Renaissance that the question has been asked: "Where was it?" This question was answered by two learned abbés about the middle of the eighteenth century, Martin de Chaupy (or de Chapuy) and De Sanctis. I shall not attempt to determine which one was the actual discoverer. De Boissier¹ gives the credit to De Chapuy, and seems to regard De Sanctis as an interloper who tried to take undue advantage of the former's researches. But De Boissier is a Frenchman and so is his De Chapuy, while De Sanctis is an Italian.

¹id. "The Country of Horace and Vergil," by De Boissier (Putnam's).

Others ascribe the actual finding of the ruins to De Sanctis. However that may be, both abbés agreed that the villa stood where we now are, and the tradition formulated by them has held and gained ground for over a century and a half. A certain school of critics, among them Boissier, has believed that the house lay further west and south up the slope, nearer that human eagle's nest Rocca Giovane; but the probabilities seem to be strongly against this theory. Modern archaeologists and the Roman schools, if I am correctly informed, accept such evidence as there is (and it is chiefly from Horace's own allusions) as favoring by long odds the present site. And so it is officially known as the "*Villa d'Orozio*," and here the work of excavating is being carried on. It is a fair inference that this estate, presented by a man of Maecenas' wealth and power, to a man of letters who had won for himself in Rome the place we know Horace did win, was probably something more than a cottage and half a dozen acres of land. There is no evidence as to size—various estimates have ranged from thirty to a hundred acres—but up to the present no Roman villa so pretentious as this one has been uncovered here in the Licenza Valley, nor do there appear to be traditions of any others. As Roman estates went elsewhere, this country place of the



ROCCA GIOVANE

probably was a modest one, though it must have seemed quite palatial to the more humble neighbors.

increasing the probabilities that our the real one is the fact that a copious one from a near-by source flows a little north, as I recall it, of the ruins, and well have been the

*Fons etiam rivo dare nomen idoneus*¹¹

ded by Horace in a somewhat indefinite description of his farm), which seems to be beginning of the main stream of valley, the "*Fiume Licenza.*"

thermore, as we stand in perhaps of Horace's guest chambers, we are ded that a Roman archaeologist of rity regards the pattern of the mosaic ent as being distinctively Republican racter.

t after all is said, it must be confessed we have no absolute and irrefutable that this is very Villa of Horatian . It *probably* was. It cannot be shown t was not. The situation is not unlike depicted on the geographical maps of orth and south polar regions in our m geographies, before the wavering nes were added that marked the final vements of Peary and Amundsen ; the

1 fountain of sufficient size to name the river."

I, 16, 12.)

colors of the known all converge toward unknown and hem it in unescapably, still they fade at last into that narrow circle of only hopeful uncertainty.

Perhaps further digging will bring to the long sought positive bit of evidence some inscription or bronze tablet that confirm our prejudices. Perhaps it is there now under the detritus that what our "Cerberus" says may be "piscina" or fish pond of the villa. there is no hope that we shall see it to before we leave.

Facing these facts, however, does diminish the keenness of our interest, orosen our belief, in the reality of what we are seeing. We note that the reticulate stone work of the main walls has been artificially built up to a height of two or three feet so as to appear better, by the author in charge of the work. "Cerberus" shows us a newly excavated "Nymphaeum" (fountain) dedicated to the water nymph and a rectangular stone hole with underground conduits leading from it, which is thought possibly to have been a heating plant. The remains of a long portico are tending out in front of the villa, also been uncovered, and we are told there is a large area in that part of the grounds which is still to be attacked with pick and shovel. Truly, the villa is :

ite than we had thought, when earlier day the padre of Licenza (we smile recall him) had shown us from afar of stones in a brushwood clearing.

now luncheon time, and our journey to Vicovaro over the footpaths of ilis by way of Rocca Giovane must run betimes, for the sky has been ing up, though we had not noticed it, yes, it is actually beginning to rain. erus" invites us into his tool hut ie shower shall pass, and secures our le signatures in the Visitors' Book, ch we note many familiar names.

shower is over. We bid "Cerberus" hearted farewells mingled with more ny-seed cakes," take a last look at the tones that once knew those "*Noctes et Deum*,"¹ and begin our climb up l to the westward, into fields, it may ere his neighbors were wont to smile y saw the poet's puffing figure labo-

7
"glebas et saxa moventem,"²
pany with his slaves or freedmen.
real "*Fons Bandusiae*" may have at Venusium; but we know that there ther one, so called, near our pathway.

ights and banquets of the gods." (Sat. II,
p. I, 14, 39, "moving clods and stones."

Of course we must not go by without at least a glimpse of it. We find it without trouble, for the ground all about is with its overflow, as might be expected this season. It is a tiny cascade, main-side spring, the main source "Digenzia" (Licenza). It is cool and attractive, but as the padre's mellow voice has not yet developed that inevitable thirst, we remain only long enough to realize the picture of a pretty pool and some indistinguishable ruins of structures proceeded on our way.

Under a tree in a bit of olive orchard we halt for bread and sausage. Through the foliage we can see the villa well below us. It is our last view. At the foot of the slope just in front of us is a mare and her foal. I wager that during the stay one or the other of the beasts will perceptibly. I lose. Sabine peacefully in and of everything. Over the seductive somnolence we also find drawing from our pockets copies of "Monumentum aere perennius," vibrate a brief Horatian sacrament reading three or four of the poet's allusions to his farm and the simple life led there.

Horace writes (Sat. II, 6) that he wanted a farm for some time before he was given him. We can readily understand

1 man of his sensitiveness would soon
1 of the artificial life he had to lead in
2 as his popularity grew. He says:
3 *I used to long for just a half-acre or so
1 shack on it, a vegetable garden, a well,
couple of nice trees! Well, I have them,
1sily more. The gods have certainly treated
yally. I am quite content."*

1 some otherwise unknown friend he
2 another time (Epp. I, 16) : " *Antici-
3 your query, my dear Quinctius, about my
1 its character, location, crops, meadows,
and vines, I will give you a short descrip-
1 right now (doubtless you'll think my pride
3 made me unusually garrulous!): a mass of
1 unbroken save by this well-wooded valley,
1 about me. The valley runs nearly north
3 south; that is, the morning sun illumines
1 estern or right-hand side, and the after-
3 sun its eastern. Climate—perfect. Cher-
1 nd plums in abundance. Two or three kinds
3 k trees furnish mast for my porkers and
1 for me. You'd think it quite like Colorado
3 uthern California. There's a brook here
1 that's colder than the Pinguisibi, and the
3 seems to agree with me perfectly. O, I
1 ou there's no place like this for me during
3 zzling days!"*

1 promised you," he writes to Maecenas
2 (p. I, 7), " *that I would come back from
3 ntry in five days, and, liar that I am, I
1 been here all of August. If I were really ill,*

I know you would forgive me; will you not forgive me for having remained away out of fear of being ill, now that early figs and hot weather are keeping the undertaker busy, and even the trifling affairs of senate and forum are bringing on fevers and necessitating night sessions of the Probate Court."

In one of the Eposes (I, 31) Horace says to Maecenas:

"Thy bounty hath enriched me beyond my dreams."

In Od. II, 16, 37, we read: *"To me unerring Fate hath given a small domain, . . . the fine breath of Grecian song, and scorn for the envious crowd."*¹

And in Od. III, I, 41:

*"But if nor Phrygian marble satisfies,
Nor purple brighter far than starry skies;
If costly wine and oriental nard
Have lost their savor for a soul-sick bard—
Then why should I erect a columned pile,
Or lofty hall, to stir up envious bile?
Why should I change my Sabine Valley, pray
For all the irksome riches of Cathay?"*

This ceremonial reading of Horace over we forsake the olive grove and our unresponsive comrades and return to the rough hillside trail. We have heard of another Bandusian fount, which we know cannot far hence. We are in dire need of it, our thirst has reached an alarming stage.

¹ Bennett's tr.

ius leads us thither. It must have been
od himself, else we had never found it.
are reasonably sure that nothing will
be able to shake our belief that this
e only real, authentic, genuine "*Fons*
lusiae," as we kneel by a babbling run-
hat gushes in considerable volume from
vice in a rock protected by overhang-
oliage. The water is as clear as a New
land spring. One of us in his eagerness
ally falls in, but he cheerfully hangs up
"dripping vestments" as an offering,
vows an ode to the "*Genius Loci*." To us,
cting on the delicate structure of odes,
sophizing and listening to the music
e waters, cometh an ancient yet pictur-
e beldame with short, scant skirt and
e brogans, and bearing a large bundle
er head. At the sight of us lounging
e spring, the crone is evidently startled.
she recovers quickly, and, dropping her
ile for a drink, cackles in toothless Sab-
e: "*Buona sera, signori; ecco la fontana*
lusiana!!" Now we know without doubt
re we are. For us the age-long debate
ided, and we make our due acknowledg-
ts, both verbally and substantially. The
I one departs in a cloud of "*Grazie*'s,
consult our watches, and discover that
must fly. The ode is never finished,
ch is just as well, for we have no desire
im the lustre of Horace.

Our dream journey to Rocca Giovane through the afternoon shadows is as unforgettable as a Palatine sunset. Innumerable nightingales sing us entirely apart from ourselves. We become wholly unaware of any earthly relationship. Every tree contains one of these elusive phantoms singing its undying melody to our ravished ears.

“Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink.
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood,
We want the key of his wild note
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality.”

In the pygmy town of Rocca Giovane, which clings to the indented rocks like a stronghold of the Peruvian Incas, there is a Horatian association that must claim our brief attention. It is with regret that we shake ourselves, as we emerge from a grove directly into the village, and wonder if we be truly mortals. But the spell cast by the little “Dryads of the trees” is gone, for the “Fane of Vacuna,” that stirs our memories, lies yonder, now the village church. Imbedded in its walls is an inscription which we easily find and read. It tells us that “*Vespasian rebuilt at his own expense this temple of Victory, which time had*

destroyed.'' In his epistle to his old Aristius Fuscus,¹ the one in which he refers to Fuscus as a lover of the city himself as a lover of the country, *in other respects they are like a pair of old odding together on a perch,*'' and then goes on to say: *“You, Fuscus, keep the nest, circle abroad admiring the streams, fissy rocks and the woodland”*—in this Horace closes by saying: *“I am content with this from the tumble-down temple of Vacuna, and am quite content, barring your opinion.”* There was uncertainty about it among the Romans, I believe, but some antiquarians identified Vacuna with Vacuna, Vacuna being the name of a Sabine town. It is quite clear that Vespasian, whose name was of Sabine extraction, accepted this theory, as the inscription on the arch of Titus shows. If the identification is correct, then we have been near where we now are when Horace wrote that friendly and playful epistle.

The church to-day commands a wide prospect. The entire valley from the Anio to the Tiber and beyond is spread out before it. We must cut short our ruminations, and there is not some way out of town leading down to the valley other than the quasi-national one suggested to us by the

¹Epp. I, 10

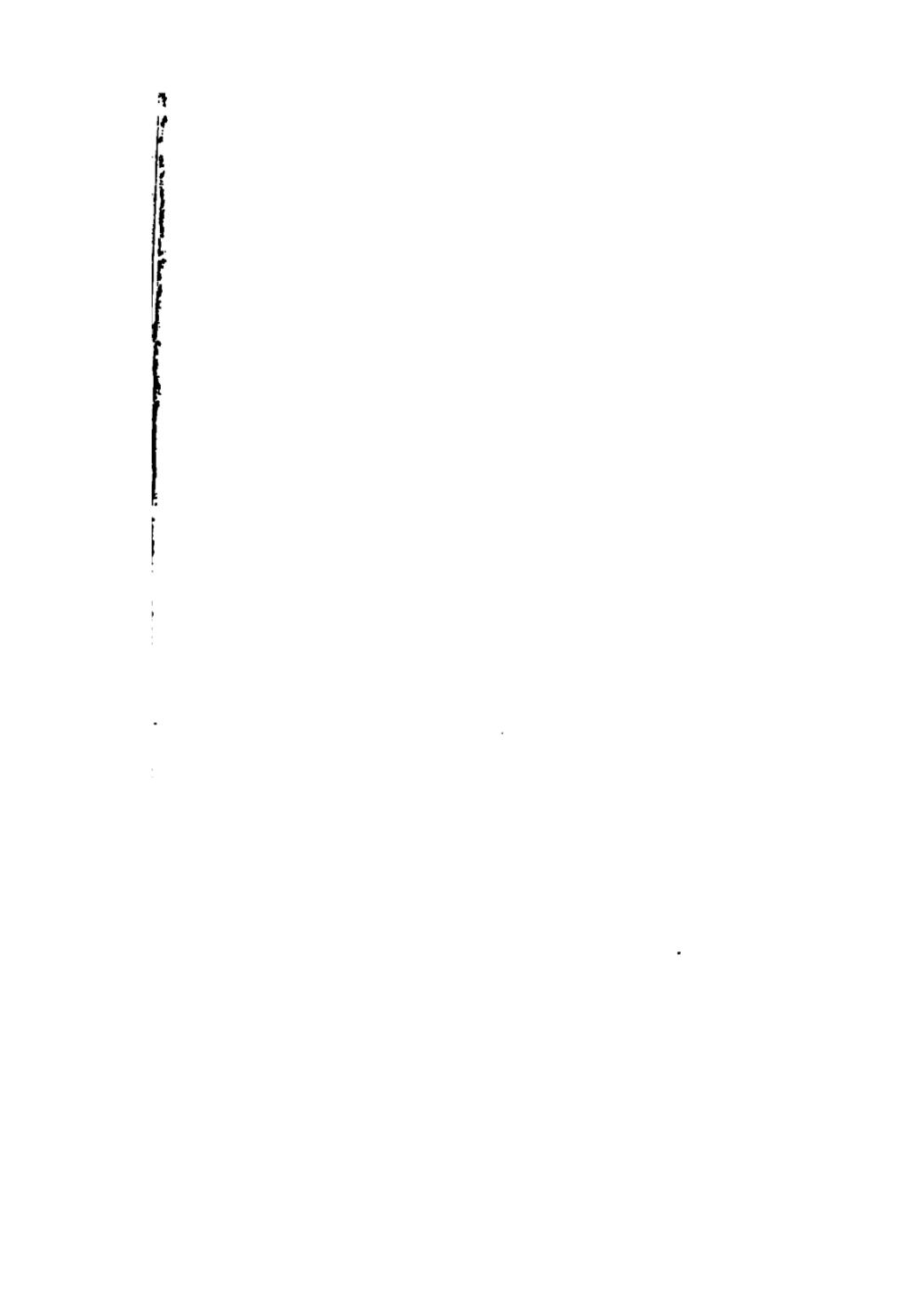
padre of guileful memory. There is we find, but the difference between it the other is so slight as to be neglig. However, if parlous, the descent is ft excitement and pleasure, and at last, e oped in the deepening shadows of a S evening, we are safely on the turnpike, ti ing to Vicovaro and our train.

Crossing the Campagna after dark, the distant glimmering lights of Rome l oning us to comfort and repose, drinki such odors of a fragrant April night as ace must have known, it is difficult for believe that threescore and more ge tions of ever-changing humanity have these poppies under foot, since the po whom we have gladly done honor to laid aside his stylus forever. Time, all, is but an impression, easily effaced dead and the living are one.

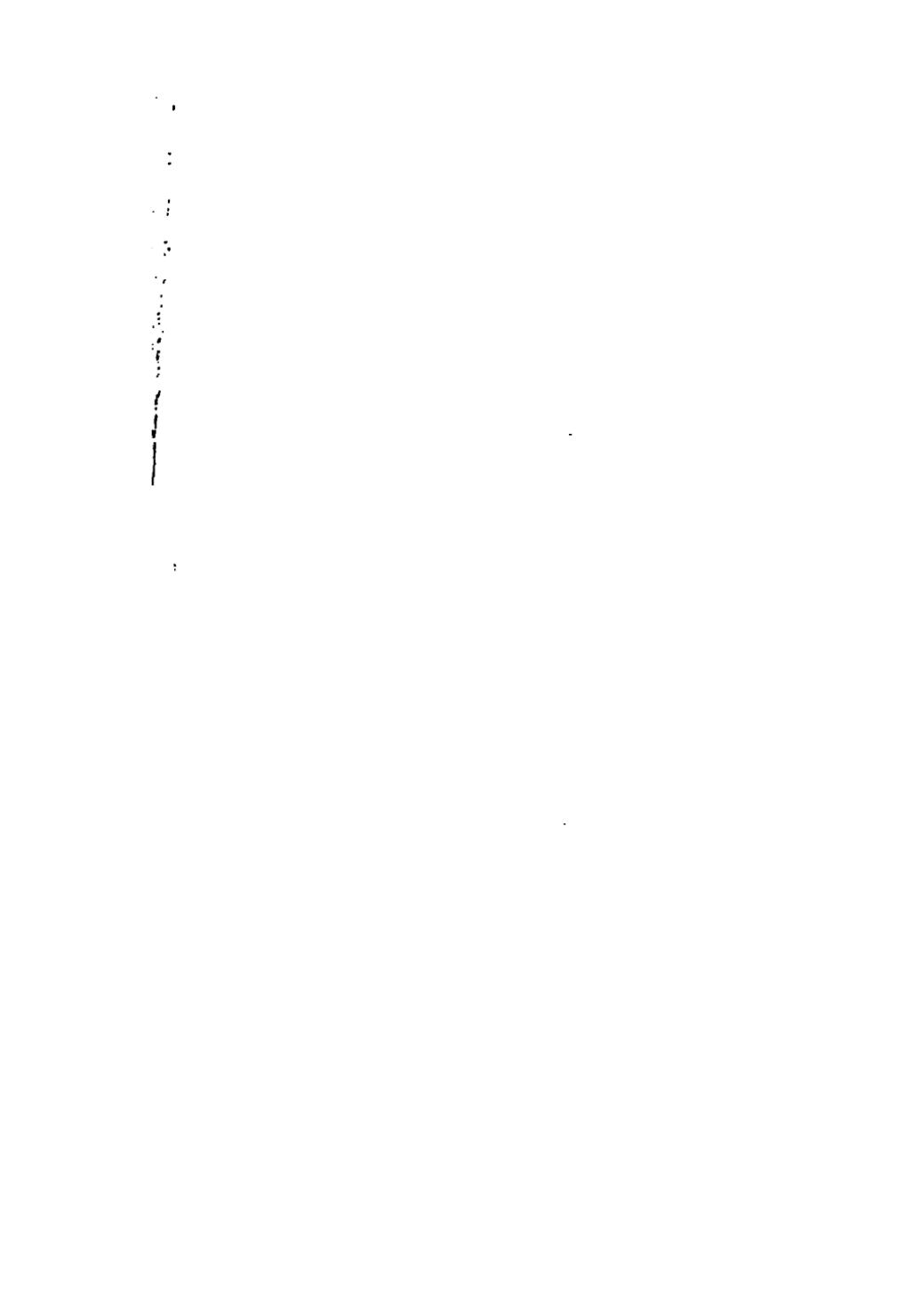


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